

**The following notice appeared on the Township Committee's March 29, 2021 Workshop Agenda and was read by Mayor Miller Prunty at the start of the Meeting**

**TOWNSHIP OF CRANFORD  
SUNSHINE NOTICE  
TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING  
March 29, 2021**

Due to the ongoing public health emergency, and the Governor's Executive Orders related to the same, the Township Committee of the Township of Cranford will conduct the March 29<sup>th</sup> Workshop Meeting remotely and by electronic means.

In accordance with N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 (the "Open Public Meetings Act") and consistent with the Department of Community Affairs, Division of Local Government Services guidelines, the Township Committee Meeting will be open to the public by electronic means. Residents can view the meetings on TV-35, YouTube CranfordTV35 and via livestream on [TV-35's Facebook Page](#).

Members of the public who wish to participate in the virtual meeting for purposes of making a public comment or to participate in any scheduled public hearing can access the videoconference at <https://meet.google.com/rkv-qdpj-nty>, or by telephone at 213-634-2478, with the access code: 367524470#

Members of the public may submit written comments in advance of a meeting, which will be read during the public portion of the meeting. Written public comments submitted prior to the meeting must identify the name and address of the commenter. No anonymous comments will be accepted. Written comments may be submitted via e-mail with the subject line "Public Comment-Township of Cranford Township Committee- Meeting Date of \_\_\_\_\_" to the Clerk of the Township Committee, Patricia Donahue at [clerk@cranfordnj.org](mailto:clerk@cranfordnj.org) or by mail addressed to: Patricia Donahue, Municipal Clerk, Township of Cranford, 8 Springfield Avenue, Cranford, NJ 07016. E-mailed comments must be received at least eight (8) hours prior to the meeting. Mailed comments must be received by 12:00 p.m. the day before the meeting.

The Minutes of the Workshop Meeting of the Township Committee of the Township of Cranford, County of Union, State of New Jersey on **March 29, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.** remotely and by electronic means.

THIS MEETING IS IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE "OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT" AS ADEQUATE NOTICE OF THIS MEETING HAS BEEN PROVIDED BY E-MAILING THE ANNUAL SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS TO THE WESTFIELD LEADER, THE UNION COUNTY LOCAL SOURCE, THE STAR LEDGER, AND TAP INTO CRANFORD, BY POSTING SUCH ANNUAL MEETING SCHEDULE ON A BULLETIN BOARD IN THE TOWN HALL RESERVED FOR SUCH ANNOUNCEMENTS AND THE FILING OF SAID NOTICE WITH THE TOWNSHIP CLERK OF CRANFORD. FORMAL ACTION MAY BE TAKEN AT THIS MEETING.

Present: Mayor Kathleen Miller Prunty  
Deputy Mayor Brian Andrews  
Commissioner Jason Gareis  
Commissioner Thomas H. Hannen, Jr.  
Commissioner Mary O'Connor

Absent: None

Township Attorney Ryan Cooper, Administrator Jamie Cryan and Township Clerk Patricia Donahue were present. Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Lavona Patterson, Police Chief Ryan Greco, Downtown Management Corporation (DMC) Director Caren Demyen, DMR Architects representative Jeffrey Curry and Green Team representative Benjamin Cohen were also present for specific Agenda topics.

### **Public Comments**

Mayor Miller Prunty opened the public comment portion of the meeting and asked if there were any questions or comments. Hearing no comments, Mayor Miller Prunty asked the Township Clerk if she had received public comments correspondence. Township Clerk Patricia Donahue stated that no public comments mail had arrived via the U.S. Post Service and no public comments had arrived via the Clerk's email address. Hearing no comments, Mayor Miller Prunty closed the public comment portion of the meeting.

### **Cranford Police Department - Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems**

Police Chief Ryan Greco stated that ConRail had offered the donation of a drone to the Police Department. Chief Greco stated that the drone could be helpful to identify activity near the ConRail tracks such as homeless encampments. Chief Greco stated that the drone would not have face recognition capabilities. Chief Greco described ways a Drone Program could assist the Township, including use by the Police, Fire, Zoning, and Police Traffic departments. Referencing the available funding for the Drone Program (as per Chief Greco's March 22nd memo, funding would come from both Conrail and the Drunk Driving Enforcement Fund,) Chief Greco expected initial Township funding would be limited to the cost of the renewal of a pilot's license. He noted that cost was approximately \$100. Discussion ensued regarding surrounding municipalities' use of drones, whether night vision would be available with the proposed drone equipment and the pilot's license requirement,

### **Finalizing the 2021 Capital Budget Requests**

Administrator Jamie Cryan provided an overview of the 2021 Capital Budget process and noted that the Capital Budget requests now totaled \$4.9 million. He asked members of the Township Committee if they had questions regarding the Capital Budget proposal. Discussion ensued as to whether the TV35's capital budget request was still included in the Capital Budget and whether the Fire Department ventilation upgrade was still included in the Capital Budget. Mayor Miller Prunty and Mr. Cryan stated that the TV35 Capital Budget request was no longer included in the proposed Capital Budget and briefly elaborated. Deputy Mayor Andrews stated that while he preferred to defer the Fire Department ventilation upgrade, he was not opposed to including the ventilation upgrade if other members of the Township Committee thought it should be included in the 2021 Capital Budget. Township Committee consensus was reached to include the Fire Department's ventilation upgrade in the Capital Budget. Mayor Miller Prunty stated that the Township Committee would now be ready to introduce the Capital Budget.

## **2021 Municipal Budget**

Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Lavona Patterson stated that the expected impact of the proposed 2021 budget on the Township's Tax Rate per \$100 would be 1.32 per cent (%). She stated that the local municipal tax increase, on the average residential property owner, was expected to be \$33.74. Ms. Patterson spoke about the challenges faced by the Township during the previous year such as a decrease in operating revenues and pool revenues, an increase in recycling costs, an increase in both pension and Rahway Valley Sewerage Authority costs and a decrease in health contributions. Ms. Patterson spoke about use of the Township surplus, noting that it was slightly higher than in previous years. Commissioner O'Connor commended CFO Patterson and her staff for their work on the 2021 Municipal Budget and noted the many challenges they had encountered during the past year. Commissioner O'Connor stated that the process "speaks well" of the Finance Department and the Township's Department Heads. Mayor Miller Prunty stated that she could not agree more with Commissioner O'Connor. Commissioner Hannen stated that CFO Patterson had done a nice job. Commissioner Hannen inquired about the presented local municipal tax increases, specifically whether an average could be calculated for the years between 2018 to 2021. CFO Patterson provided a brief overview of the Swim Pool Utility budget and the Special Improvement District (SID) budget.

## **375 Centennial Avenue Update - DMR Architects**

Mr. Jeffrey Curry of DMR Architects was present.

Mr. Curry stated that the architectural drawings for 375 Centennial Avenue were complete. He stated that proposed bid documents had been sent to the Township Attorney for review. Mr. Curry stated that flooring and building security equipment may be able to be purchased through cooperative purchasing programs. He briefly discussed meeting with the stakeholders of 375 Centennial Avenue and alternate bidding processes. Administrator Jamie Cryan stated that he had participated in a "walk-through" at 375 Centennial Avenue during the previous week with Mr. Curry, Construction Code Official Rich Belluscio and Recreation Director Steve Robertazzi. Deputy Mayor Andrews stated that a working group had been established to discuss 375 Centennial Avenue matters and briefly elaborated. Township Clerk Patricia Donahue requested that her office be notified regarding upcoming bid process matters.

## **Renewable Energy Program**

Members of the Green Team, Mr. Jay Stevens and Mr. Kent Lucas, were present.

Mr. Lucas described the interest in a Renewable Energy Program. Mr. Lucas stated that as the Township increases its demand for Green Energy, it will be made clear to the Energy marketplace that the Township demands Green Energy. Noting that residents are automatically opted-in to such a program, and must opt out if they are not interested in participating, Mayor Miller Prunty inquired if there was a way to change the automatic opt-in feature of the program. Mr. Lucas explained that due to New Jersey Statutes and Rules (N.J.S.A.), residents had to be automatically opted-in to the program. Mayor Miller Prunty inquired about surrounding communities with Renewable Energy Programs. Mr. Lucas responded that Maplewood, Livingston, Princeton and Verona had Renewable Energy Programs and that Westfield obtained the services of a consultant regarding this matter. Deputy Mayor Andrews inquired about whether savings would be realized by the residents with this Program. Discussion ensued regarding the Board of Public Utilities' regulation (Mr. Lucas,) the Township's current energy agreement with EMEX (Administrator Cryan,) Union County Improvement Authority's work on a Renewable Energy Program (Administrator Cryan,) the intent of the program for residential customers, i.e., not for commercial customers (Mr. Lucas) and concerns with the automatic opt-in aspect of the Program, specifically with elderly residents (Commissioner Hannen.) Discussion ensued. Mayor Miller Prunty suggested this matter be discussed at the next Township Committee Meeting. She also requested that all questions about the Program be forwarded to Administrator Cryan and that the Green Team representatives meet with Mr. Cryan on this matter.

### **Food Waste Collection Program**

Member of the Green Team, Mr. Ben Cohen, was present.

Mr. Cohen provided a brief overview of the proposed Food Waste Collection Program, stating that food waste is repurposed to a renewable energy source. He stated that it was expected that the implementation of the Program would significantly reduce waste carried by current haulers, the food waste would be collected at the Conservation Center and then moved to Elizabeth and proposed funding for the Program. Mr. Cohen proposed a one (1) year Program trial. Discussion ensued including discussion about Westfield's experience with the Food Waste Collection Program (Mayor Miller Prunty) and proposed hours of operations, whether animals would be attracted to the waste bins and the size of the bins (Deputy Mayor Andrews.) Mr. Cohen stated that the Conservation Center hours wouldn't change, waste pickup would occur on Wednesdays, the bins are fifty-five (55) gallons, and there is not expected to be an issue with rodents. Further discussion ensued including discussion about Department of Public Work's Superintendent, Erik Hastrup's opinion on the Program (Commissioner Gareis,) amount of the funding grant (Mayor Miller Prunty,) costs of the bins, specifically monthly fees of one (1) bin, \$140.00 and two (2) bins, \$250.00 (Mr. Cohen,) and the frequency of waste pick-up (Commissioner Hannen.)

Mayor Miller Prunty asked Administrator Jamie Cryan to look at possible additional costs associated with the Food Waste Collection Program. Mayor Miller Prunty asked Township Attorney Ryan Cooper about suggested next steps. Mr. Cooper suggested a resolution to be considered by the Township Committee authorizing a contract with the Program's vendor.

### **Plastic Bag Use (Ban) Working Group**

Mayor Miller Prunty stated that we had one (1) year to work with members of the public on the plastics ban as the State of New Jersey would be banning certain plastics in 2022. She stated that she would be forming a Working Group to look at the ban of plastics in Cranford and elaborated.

### **Parklet and Street Closures - Spring/Summer 2021 plan**

Referencing her March 23rd email about Parklet/Street Closure information, Downtown Management Corporation Director Caren Demyen provided an overview of the proposed parklets in Cranford's Downtown area. She noted that she had contacted the appropriate insurance carrier regarding this proposal and that some of the area required New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJ DOT) sign-off. Discussion ensued. Ms. Demyen stated that the Police and Fire departments had been very helpful to her with the parklet process.

### **Review Official Meeting Agenda**

Township Clerk Patricia Donahue stated that there may be an addition of Minutes (March 8th Workshop Minutes) for consideration at the following evening's Official Meetings Agenda if she could get them completed during the following morning.

### **Minute Approval - Closed Session Minutes of March 8th and March 9, 2021**

Commissioner Hannen requested the postponement of consideration of Minutes approval for March 8th and March 9, 2021 as he proposed two changes to the proposed Minutes.

### **Closed Session**

On motion of Commissioner Gareis, seconded by Commissioner O'Connor and passed, the following resolution was adopted by roll call vote:

### **Resolution No. 2021-98.8**

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Township Committee will go into closed session to discuss the following, the minutes of which will be released at some time in the future at the discretion of the Township Committee:

**Legal**

- Legal Update
- Draft Redevelopment Plan for 750 Walnut Avenue – Topology NJ LLC
- OPRA Processing

**Personnel**

- Department of Public Works
- Building Department
- Police Department
- Downtown Management Corporation

**Minute review**

- Closed Session Minutes of March 8<sup>th</sup> and March 9, 2021

**Recorded Vote:**

Aye: Mayor Miller Prunty, Deputy Mayor Andrews, Commissioners Gareis, Hannen, & O'Connor

Nay: None

Abstained: None

Absent: None

During the Closed Session Meeting, Commissioner Gareis left the Meeting at 9:12 p.m. and Deputy Mayor Andrews left the Meeting at 9:30 p.m.

On motion of Commissioner Hannen, seconded by Commissioner O'Connor and passed, the Township Committee returned to open session at 9:33 p.m.

**Review Official Meeting Agenda (continued)**

Commissioner Hannen inquired about a proposed resolution pertaining to 615 Brookside Place and sanitary sewer repair. A brief discussion ensued including discussion that the resolution had been removed from the Official Meeting Agenda.

On motion of Commissioner Hannen, seconded by Commissioner O'Connor and passed, the Township Committee adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Donahue  
Township Clerk

Dated: March 29, 2021